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Military Deployment: First Considerations

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Leaving family, friends and your civilian job for deployment can be very difficult. Here are some ways to cope.

- **Prepare for departure as early as possible.** Accounting for personal and business requirements will allow you to focus on family and friends before you depart.
- **Talk to your military unit and identify what it wants you to do and when.** Then, schedule personal and civilian job needs around these requirements.
- **Discuss your pending absence with your manager and teammates.** Understand that it is normal for loved ones to feel angry during this time. Continue to let family and friends know that you love them. It will help them cope while you are away.
- **If you have children, make sure they understand** why you are leaving and that they are not responsible.
- **Both the military and your employer have professionals** such as the chaplain or a mental health professional who may be helpful in discussing your thoughts and feelings about this deployment.
- **Plan practical ways you can stay in touch,** such as weekly letters or regular e-mails. It will help ease the pain of separation.
- **If you are not married, designate a trusted friend or relative** to handle mortgage/rent and/or any other payments that are not automatic, on your behalf.
- **Create a power of attorney (POA)** that you designate who is trustworthy and experienced enough to handle your finances while you are away.
- **Review your life insurance policies,** including your employer's group life plan, to ensure that you have designated the correct beneficiaries and are getting the best rates possible.
- **With a lawyer, prepare a legal will** that addresses your property, financial and child-care issues, even if you have already named beneficiaries in your service record. You can also establish your will through the military at no cost while activated or during drilling.
- **Consider creating a living will** instructing others how to handle medical situations if you become incapacitated.
- **Review your legal and financial rights** under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA). Also review your reemployment rights outlined in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) found on the Internet under Employer Support to the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) at www.esgr.mil.
- **Create a folder with important documents,** policy numbers, key contacts, phone numbers, and information on how to access Internet accounts.

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